

November 19, 1958

Hon. Lister Hill  
Senate Office Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Hill:

Let me first say how much I appreciate your cordial and gracious letter of November 14. The nation is of course very much in your own debt for your splendid efforts in behalf of Science, Education and Medical Research. I imagine that only a minute fraction of my colleagues will have found an occasion such as this one furnishes to express their profound appreciation.

I was particularly impressed by your bold efforts in behalf of Federal Aid to higher education during the last legislative session. While the National Defense Science Education Act was only a small measure in the right direction as it was finally passed and fell far short of the goals you had yourself pressed for, it was, I hope, a small step that will be followed by others. I am taking the liberty of enclosing a memorandum stating my own personal views on a mechanism for Federal Aid that might help to minimize the fears of bureaucratic control. The impact of a one-time Junior Senator from Wisconsin on academic freedom in this country has been of course one of the chief motivating factors behind that fear. Happily we have grown out of such adolescent nonsense, at least to a degree, but I am sure that most of us would prefer a mechanism of administration of Federal benefits that could minimize political interference in education of that kind.

I am happy to have the reprint from the Congressional Record concerning your Bill Senate Joint Resolution 199. You are undoubtedly aware that the National Institutes of Health has, within the framework of existing legislation, been able to give token support to a very few fine institutions doing outstanding work in Medical Research. I was already aware of the content of your Bill and applaud its objectives with great enthusiasm. Quite apart from its humanitarian objectives in alleviating disease throughout the world it is of course undeniably true that medical progress in any country is of immediate and inestimable benefit to the citizens of the United States. One need merely point to penicillin and the sulfonamides as instances of scientific advances initiated in research laboratories in other countries which have undoubtedly saved many thousands or millions of American lives. I have every confidence in the judgement and goodheartedness of the Administrative Officers of the National Institutes of Health and would be inclined to rely on them for advice on the most effective proportionation of domestic versus foreign support and on the best mechanisms for achieving it. I do not know whether the existing health counsels have formulated a specific policy pertaining to the objectives of your Bill. Nevertheless, there can scarcely be any doubt but that it is one of the most enlightened proposals ever to have been placed before the Congress and you have my

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ernest good wishes for it.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

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